DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 477 188 EA 032 521

AUTHOR	Ferguson, Maria
TITLE	Making Good Choices: A Guide for Schools and Districts. Revised Edition. [with CD-ROM].
INSTITUTION	North Central Regional Educational Lab., Naperville, IL.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2002-10-00
NOTE	66p.; Originally written by Bryan Hassel. For previous edition, see ED 440 441. CD-ROM not available from ERIC.
CONTRACT	ED-01-CO-0011
AVAILABLE FROM	North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 1120 East Diehl Road, Suite 200, Naperville, IL 60563 ($4.99). Tel: 630-649-6500; Tel: 800-356-2735 (Toll Free); Fax: 630-649-6700; e-mail: info@ncrel.org; Web site: http://www.ncrel.org.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Non-Print Media (100)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Change Strategies; *Educational Change; Educational Improvement; *Educational Practices; Elementary Secondary Education; *Guides; School Districts

ABSTRACT

This guide was designed to help schools develop effective programs in comprehensive school reform (CSR). It emphasizes that a school's CSR approach should be based on its needs, keeping in mind that one model may not provide every aspect of a school's comprehensive reform effort. Even so, a CSR model that meets the U.S. Department of Education's 11 criteria--especially a model with a proved track record--can serve as a focal point to help organize all the steps and processes required for CSR. This document provides an array of comprehensive designs from which to choose, all of which meet the 11 criteria. The models range from nationally recognized designs to smaller models that were developed by a local entity or university. The guide outlines four basic steps in the decision-making process about CSR: decide on who will be involved and a timeline; evaluate the current situation; create a profile of an ideal CSR approach; and conduct research on a variety of CSR models to make a good decision on a program. The guide also discusses CSR funding grants. A set of appendices provides a self-evaluation tool, a summary of self-evaluations, a profiling tool, a research grid, a list of resources, and a list of research questions. Included with this booklet is an interactive CD-ROM that presents all the tools in the appendices. The CD-ROM--usable in both Windows and Macintosh platforms--provides assistance to schools and districts in conducting self-evaluation, profiling a comprehensive reform approach, and making a final decision. (RJM)

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Making Good Choices: A Guide for Schools and Districts. Revised Edition [includes CD-ROM].

Bryan Hassel
Updated by Maria Ferguson

October 2002

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Comprehensive School Reform

MAKING GOOD CHOICES

A Guide for Schools and Districts

Revised Edition

NCREL

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Making Good Choices

A Guide for School and Districts

Revised Edition

October 2002

By Bryan Hassel, Ph.D.

Updated by Maria Ferguson

NCREL

Revised Edition With Interactive CD-ROM

This 2002 revised edition of *Making Good Choices: A Guide for Schools and Districts* reflects the current legislation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The booklet now addresses the two newest components of comprehensive school reform. Also included with the booklet is an interactive CD-ROM that presents all the tools in the appendices. The CD-ROM—usable in both Windows and Macintosh platforms—provides assistance to schools and districts in conducting a self-evaluation, profiling a comprehensive reform approach, and making a final decision.

Acknowledgments

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This work was produced in whole or in part with funds from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education, under contract number ED-01-CO-0011. The content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of OERI or the Department of Education, nor does mention or visual representation of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the federal government.

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Making Good Choices: A Guide for Schools and Districts

Introduction

Schools across the Unites States are taking a new approach to school improvement called *comprehensive school reform*, or CSR. Rather than implementing isolated programs that may or may not improve the academic performance of all students, CSR schools seek to revitalize themselves by implementing scientifically based models for comprehensive school improvement that focus on all aspects of the school's operations. These models are based on challenging academic standards, strong professional development components, and meaningful outreach to both parents and communities. Expert trainers and facilitators work with schools at every stage of implementation.

Comprehensive school reform takes different forms in different schools. Each school develops and implements a detailed plan for transforming the way that the school works. Ideally, this plan will address that school's unique needs, build on its strengths, and help the school overcome its challenges.

> Making good choices means planning, selecting, and implementing a comprehensive approach to school reform that works for your school.

This guide was designed to help your school develop an approach to comprehensive school reform that works. In schools that tried such reform and failed, school leaders frequently made hasty and uninformed decisions about what approach to follow or pursued an approach pressed upon them from outside. These schools did not go through a deliberate process of examining their needs and creating a CSR approach that met those needs.

This guide's purpose is to help you make good decisions about comprehensive school reform. One important decision, addressed in detail by this guide, is the choice of one or more research-based CSR "models" to serve as the centerpiece of your approach. But successful comprehensive school reform is about much more than choosing a model. It is about developing a common vision of change with the power to sustain the school community through the hard work of school reform.

Overview

What is the Comprehensive School Reform Program?

Many schools have been following the CSR approach for years as Title I "schoolwide programs" or as part of the Goals 2000 school improvement initiatives. The U.S. Department of Education expanded the scope of comprehensive school reform in 1998 with the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, a $145 million grant program for schools that pursued such reform. Grants of no less than $50,000 (renewable for two more years) were made available to schools that selected a comprehensive model that met the U.S. Department of Education's criteria. Approximately 1,800 schools received grants as part of the original

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1998 cohort, and 3,500 more schools received grants through funding increases in 2000 and 2001.

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This legislation reauthorized the Comprehensive School Reform Program. The FY 2002 appropriations provide $310 million for comprehensive school reform, with $235 million directed toward Title I schools and $75 million available to all public schools. CSR grants are now renewable for up to two years.

11 Criteria for Choosing Models

According to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (2002a), schools are required to implement a CSR model that satisfies the following 11 criteria:

- **Comprehensive Design With Aligned Components:** "Integrates a comprehensive design with aligned components."
- **Support Within the School:** "Is supported within the school by teachers, administrators, and staff."
- **Measurable Goals and Benchmarks:** "Includes measurable goals and benchmarks for student achievement."
- **Strategies That Improve Academic Achievement:** "Has been found to significantly improve the academic achievement of students or demonstrates strong evidence that it will improve the academic achievement of students."
- **Proven Methods and Strategies Based on Scientifically Based Research:** "Employs proven methods and strategies based on scientifically based research."
- **Professional Development:** "Provides ongoing, high-quality professional development for teachers and staff."
- **Support for Teachers, Administrators, and Other Staff:** "Provides support for teachers, administrators, and staff."
- **External Technical Support and Assistance:** "Uses high-quality external technical support and assistance from an external partner with experience and expertise in schoolwide reform and improvement."
- **Parent and Community Involvement:** "Provides for meaningful parent and community involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluating school improvement activities."
- **Coordination of Resources:** "Identifies resources to support and sustain the school's comprehensive reform effort."
- **Evaluation Strategies:** "Plans for the evaluation of strategies for the implementation of school reforms and for student results achieved, annually."

Note: In the CSR legislation and on most state's application forms, the 11 criteria appear in a different order but are otherwise identical to those listed here. For the precise order, see the CSR *Program* Web site at **www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/**. Also, be sure to look closely at your state's application materials to see how the state has put these criteria into practice in its competitive grant process.

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The Department of Education's criteria require that CSR models employ proven strategies and methods that are based upon scientifically based research and effective practices to improve student achievement. The models selected by CSR grantees must now meet 11 criteria to be eligible for funding.

Your school's CSR approach should be based on its needs, but it is important to remember that one model may not provide every aspect of your school's comprehensive reform effort. However, a comprehensive model that meets the U.S. Department of Education's 11 criteria—especially a model with a proven track record—can serve as a focal point to help organize all of the steps and processes required for comprehensive school reform.

To be eligible for CSR Program funds, your school must implement a comprehensive approach that meets 11 criteria outlined in the authorizing legislation.

Your school is free to choose other models, develop a model of its own, or combine multiple models within a comprehensive approach. The bottom line is that in order to be eligible for CSR funds, your school must choose an approach that meets the 11 criteria.

The 11 criteria for choosing a CSR model are as follows:

1. *Comprehensive Design With Aligned Components.* Every component of the CSR approach supports a clear vision of school improvement. All aspects of school functioning—from curriculum, instruction, and assessment, to governance and management, to parent and community involvement—are designed to move the school toward its chosen destination. These components fit together into a schoolwide reform plan designed to enable all students to meet challenging content and performance.

2. *Support Within the School.* The school's faculty, staff, and other critical stakeholders support the approach and are committed to its implementation.

3. *Measurable Goals and Benchmarks.* The approach has measurable goals for student performance and benchmarks for meeting those goals.

4. *Strategies That Improve Academic Achievement.* The methods and strategies of the approach result in significant improvements in school achievement. The program must meet one of the following requirements: (1) The program has been found, through scientifically based research, to significantly improve the academic achievement of participating students, or (2) the program has been found to have strong evidence that it will significantly improve the academic achievement of participating children.

5. *Proven Methods and Strategies Based on Scientifically Based Research.* The approach employs proven methods and innovative strategies for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on reliable research and effective practices. These methods and strategies have been replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics. In this guide, we further subdivide this criterion into four categories:

- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment
- Governance and management

6. *Professional Development*. The approach provides high-quality and continuous professional development and training for teachers and staff.

7. *Support for Teachers, Administrators, and Other School Staff*. The approach provides training and support both in and outside the classroom, including administrators and other staff.

8. *External Technical Support and Assistance*. The approach uses high-quality external support and assistance from an organization with experience or expertise in schoolwide reform and improvement.

9. *Parent and Community Involvement*. The approach provides for the meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in the improvement of the school.

10. *Coordination of Resources*. The approach identifies how other resources (federal, state, local, and private) available to the school will be aligned and used to support the school reform effort.

11. *Evaluation Strategies*. The approach includes a plan for evaluating its impact on student learning.

How will this guide help your school pursue comprehensive school reform?

This guide sets out a process to help schools choose a CSR model that both makes sense for an individual school *and* meets the 11 criteria. There is an array of comprehensive designs from which to choose, ranging from nationally recognized designs to smaller "homegrown" models that are developed by a local entity or university.

Having all of these choices offers an exciting opportunity, but it also presents challenges.

Four Basic Steps for Decision Making

1. Laying the groundwork.
2. Evaluating your current situation.
3. Profiling an ideal approach.
4. Deciding on a model.

Looking at all the choices you face, your school needs to select a design that fits—one that addresses the needs of your students, aligns with your school community's "vision" for the school, builds on your assets, and helps address your challenges.

This guide outlines four basic steps in a decision-making process about comprehensive school reform:

1. *Laying the Groundwork*. You decide who will be involved in the process, what kind of outside help you need, and what sort of timeline to set.

2. *Evaluating Your Current Situation*. Your school takes a look at where you stand in three categories: your students' learning and accomplishments, your current school program, and the support for school improvement in your external environment.

3. *Profiling*. You create a profile of an ideal comprehensive school reform approach for your school.

4. *Deciding*. Based on your profile, you conduct research on a variety of comprehensive school reform models and make a decision about what to pursue.

The outcome of the process is a decision, but the process itself is important. Research on comprehensive school reform makes it clear that for wide-ranging change to succeed, there must be commitment from the school—not

just from the principal, but from teachers, other staff, parents, community members, the school district, and perhaps others. The process outlined here will not only help you reach a decision, it will help you reach one that garners the commitment of your entire school community.

Although this guide talks about CSR funding grants, it does not provide help in preparing an application for CSR Program funds. Because state and local procedures vary, it is important for you to investigate exactly what is required in your situation. The work you do using this guide, however, should provide you with much of the information you will need to prepare your application.

The tools in this guide are beneficial to schools whether or not they receive funding under that program. At its core, this guide is about devising ways to improve your school, not about applying for a grant. Even if you are ineligible for CSR Program funds or are not awarded a grant, the guide will help your school make great strides toward comprehensive improvement.

Each state has its own application that schools and districts must complete to solicit funding. Questions about applying for CSR Program funds should be directed to your state education agency.

Step 1: Laying the Groundwork

Who should be involved in making decisions about comprehensive school reform?

Involving a wide range of stakeholders in the decision-making process is important for many reasons. Casting a wide net ensures that decisions respond to the real needs of the diverse students who attend your school. And broad involvement helps foster ownership—a commitment to the reform you select on the part of the entire school community.

Inform and involve a wide range of stakeholders to make sure your plan addresses diverse needs and is supported by the entire school community.

At the same time, most schools elect to establish a subcommittee or small group to act on behalf of the larger task force. Organizing a small group (perhaps a dozen or fewer people) makes it easier to move the process forward in an efficient fashion. Such a group can have meaningful discussions, divide up responsibilities, and hold its members accountable for carrying out their assigned tasks.

Your school may already have such a group in place—an existing school-improvement team or a site council. Comprehensive school reform will work best if it builds upon your ongoing school-improvement efforts. So put your existing school-improvement team to work on this process to avoid duplicating effort and to ensure that other activities at the school dovetail with comprehensive reform. If you decide to create a new task force from scratch, be sure to think carefully about how the new team will communicate and collaborate with preexisting entities at the school. You probably have done quite a bit of work on school improvement in the past. Make sure you capitalize on these efforts as you move forward.

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To ensure that the task force represents the entire school community, you can take two important steps:

- Make sure that representatives of critical stakeholder groups are part of the task force. There is no set list of whom you should involve, but the box on page 6 provides some useful suggestions, based in part on a national study of model school planning processes.
- Build communication with people outside the task force into the entire process. Announce the effort to your school community, and invite input and participation. Depending on how much time you have, invite people outside the task force to complete some of the tools outlined in this guide, such as the needs assessment. Later in the guide, we also present some suggestions about submitting the task force's decisions to a wider audience for review.

In general, task forces like these submit recommendations to others for decisions rather than making decisions themselves. In this guide, when we refer to the task force "making a decision," we are talking about deciding what recommendation to pass on.

In the context of the comprehensive school reform, it is important to think through how the district will be involved in your planning process. First, all applications for CSR grant funding must go through your local school district. Second, support from your district in the comprehensive reform process can be critical to its success. Comprehensive reform is much more likely to work if your district provides you with at least some of the human and financial resources you need and gives you the flexibility to carry out your plan.

Finally, consider whether it makes sense to bring in an outside facilitator to help with the process. Whether or not your school should look for outside facilitation depends in part on your past experience with planning and decision-making efforts in your school. Have members of your school community developed the kinds of skills needed to shepherd a complicated process like the one outlined in these pages? Do members of the school community trust one another sufficiently to allow insiders to act as facilitators? If the answers to these two questions are no, outside facilitation should be a priority for you. These "no" answers also may indicate some deeper issues that you will need to address as you pursue comprehensive reform (as discussed under Step 2).

Building a Representative Team

A representative planning team includes people such as:

- School and district administrators
- Teachers representing various grades, content areas, and teams
- Other professional school staff
- Parents
- Community representatives
- Business people
- Higher-education representatives
- Students

Adapted from *Implementing Schoolwide Programs (Volume I): An Idea Book on Planning* (Policy Studies Associates, 1998a).

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How much time should be spent developing a plan?

The process outlined in these pages has no specific timeline. In designing this process, we had two scenarios in mind—a short one and a long one. In the short scenario, your school already has spent some time getting ready for change and now spends just a few months working through the issues covered in the guide. You work quickly, perhaps, in order to meet your district's deadline for an application under the CSR grant program or because your school already has been involved for some months in the planning phase for comprehensive school reform. Using the short scenario does not mean that your school works out every detail of your CSR approach in just a few months. Comprehensive reform entails a process of continuous improvement that starts well before and extends far beyond the submission of any grant application.

Getting to the point where you can begin to implement a CSR approach is time-consuming and work-intensive. Shortchanging this process will shortchange successful implementation.

In the long scenario, your school engages in a full-blown planning process that may last a year or more. The long scenario includes a comprehensive needs assessment, a detailed visioning process, and extensive research into reform options. Do not think of the longer scenario as just a delay in doing the work of school reform. On the contrary, the longer scenario involves concentrated activity building toward implementation of comprehensive school reform.

During this planning period, take the time to build the capacity of your team to work together, to foster commitment to the idea of change within your school, to enhance trust among school stakeholders, and generally to create the conditions in which comprehensive reform can succeed. CSR grant funds can be used only for the implementation of comprehensive reform, so if you choose the long scenario you may need to delay the submission of a CSR grant application.

If you opt for the short scenario, you can use the tools provided with this guide as a checklist for readiness. If you choose the long scenario, you may want to ask yourself at each stage whether you want to do more. For example, you may want to undertake a more complex needs assessment than the one we outline here. For going deeper, you will need other resources, some of which are listed in Appendix F of this guide.

Whichever scenario you pursue, a critical early step is to establish a timeline for the process. After you review the contents of this guide, map out the steps along the way and determine how much time you would like to devote to each. Map backwards from the time your CSR grant application is due through all of the steps leading up to submitting a high-quality application.

Steps to Include in a Timeline

- Laying the groundwork
- Evaluating your current situation
- Profiling your comprehensive reform approach
- Researching and decision making
- Preparing your application
- Filing by the application due date

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Step 2: Evaluating Your Current Situation

Before determining what types of CSR models your school is interested in, you first should critically examine your current situation and pinpoint your highest priorities for improvement. The NCREL-developed Self-Evaluation Tool (see Appendix A) is designed to help your school create a snapshot of where you are, in relation to such critical factors as governance and management, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and community involvement.

The tool is split into three parts. "Part I: Our Students," located in Appendix A, asks questions about the extent to which your students are meeting the standards set for them. "Part II: The Current State of Our School's Program" uses the CSR Program's 11 criteria to assess the current state of your school's program. "Part III: Our Environment" looks at resources and constraints that lie outside your walls.

To determine where you want to focus your reform effort, you first must carefully examine your current situation and pinpoint your highest priorities for improvement.

Overall Instructions

NCREL's self-evaluation process is just one possible tool you could use for this purpose. You already may have completed a needs assessment. Or perhaps you are required by your district or state to use a particular tool. Regardless of the evaluation tool you choose, we recommend that you complete the Summary of Self-Evaluation found in Appendix B.

Who should complete the tool? Schools can approach this issue in different ways. One approach is to have your team discuss each question and arrive at a common judgment. Another is to have individuals fill out the tool and then tabulate and discuss the results. Either way, it is important to have a mechanism for differences of opinion to be openly expressed and considered.

For each question in Parts I and 2, the tool asks you to indicate the extent to which the question is addressed in your school. The choices are "Not at All," "Slight Extent," "Moderate Extent," "Great Extent," and "Not Applicable." Because of the nature of the questions, providing details and evidence to support your judgment is critical to your response.

For example, one question is: "To what extent is the proportion of students meeting your school's standards consistent across subjects, grade levels, and student groups?" Suppose you give your school a "Slight extent" rating on this question. The "Details and Evidence" section provides a place to be more specific about why you assigned this rating. Your qualifying statements might note, for example, that student performance is especially low in reading, while achievement in other subjects looks a lot better. Or that student groups are performing at similar levels, with the exception of those for whom English is not their first language. You also might make note of any compelling evidence you have to support your conclusions—test score data, for instance, that show gaps between your reading scores and those in other subjects. The critical issue here is to use data and evidence to support your ratings.

There also are spaces throughout the Self-Evaluation Tool where you can include more specific questions that your school thinks are important. For example, suppose your school recently embarked on an effort to introduce alternative forms of assessment, such as using portfolios of student work to gauge progress over time. You might add a series of questions to ask how well this specific initiative was shaping up, such as the following:

> Data-driven decision making is critical to making good choices. Evidence of success and need should be substantiated with data that reflect information for all students.

- To what extent are teachers in our school using portfolios to assess students' progress?
- To what extent does the use of portfolios vary by teacher, grade level, or subject?
- To what extent are our teachers well prepared to guide students in their preparation of portfolios?
- To what extent are teachers effectively using the information they gain through portfolios to adjust their instruction for individual children?

However you decide to approach using this tool, it is critical that you spend quality time responding to the questions and providing supporting evidence.

The questions in Part 3 are open-ended questions and do not include ratings. To the right of each question is space for you to write your thoughts in the form of details and evidence.

Self-Evaluation Tool

Part 1: *Our Students*

Part 1 of Appendix A contains a short list of questions designed to give you a quick picture of how well your students are doing at your school. The questions relate both to the overall performance of your students and to the performance of specific subgroups.

Self-Evaluation Tool

Part 2: *Our School Program*

Part 2 is the heart of the self-evaluation, containing a host of questions designed to help you assess the current state of your school's overall program. The questions are organized along the lines of the CSR Program's 11 criteria, so evaluating your school using this instrument should help you pinpoint areas to focus on in order to pursue comprehensive reform.

Self-Evaluation Tool

Part 3: *Our Environment*

In addition to the internal issues explored in Part 2, your school's success in pursuing comprehensive reform will depend on the resources available to you—and the constraints imposed upon you—from outside. Part 3 asks you to answer a series of questions designed to assess your environment. This assessment has four subparts, which examine the following:

1. Existing reform efforts under way in your district and state.
2. Policy and regulatory issues.
3. Financial resources available to you from outside.
4. Human resources available to you from outside.

Questions to Ask About Your School

- Is there a shared vision for your school?
- Are there measurable goals for student performance?
- How is your community involved in the learning process?
- What is your level of teacher quality?

Summary of Self-Evaluation

The Summary of Self-Evaluation (found in Appendix B) provides you with the opportunity to pull together what you have learned by completing the Self-Evaluation Tool. The goal is to help you identify the assets your school brings with it as well as the challenges you face. Both the assets and the challenges can be internal (characteristics of your school) or external (characteristics of the environment in which your school works).

This summary poses six questions: (1) What are our school's major strengths? (2) What areas of our school need improvement? (3) Of these needs for improvement, what are the highest priorities? (4) What barriers (both internal and external) do we expect to face as we move forward on comprehensive reform? (5) What aspects of our school's environment might provide support for our pursuit of comprehensive reform? and (6) What areas of our environment might hinder our ability to pursue comprehensive school reform?

To answer the first question, you may note that your students do particularly well in math, that your school's curriculum is quite well put-together, that teachers are heavily engaged in decision making, and that many parents are highly involved in the school's workings.

In answer to the second and third questions, you might indicate that in reading, your students lag behind their performance in other subjects and that limited-English-proficient students are not doing as well as others.

For the fourth question, you might note that your faculty has little experience observing one another and offering feedback, activities that might be critical to implementing comprehensive reform.

For the fifth and sixth questions, you need to consider how the school environment might support or hinder comprehensive school reform. You might note that some parents are highly involved in the school, but efforts to involve minority parents should be improved.

It is important at this stage to begin paring what could be a large set of priority needs into something more manageable. As educators, we are inclined to want to attack all of our problems at once, but we know this is not the most productive way to proceed. Begin prioritizing here, identifying your most important strengths and challenges.

What You Should Learn About Your School

1. What are its major strengths?
2. What areas need improvement?
3. Which of these areas needing improvement have the highest priority?
4. What barriers do you expect to face as you move forward on comprehensive reform?

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You May Need More Time if...

1. The school's needs for improvement are not comprehensive in nature.
2. School stakeholders lack the commitment, capabilities, or collegial working relationships needed to make comprehensive reform a success.
3. The school does not have the support it will need from the district to implement comprehensive school reform.

Issues to Consider Before Moving Forward

After you have completed your Summary of Self-Evaluation, you should have a valuable tool in your hands—a concise analysis of your school's main assets and challenges. But before you take the next step, there are some issues to consider.

Implementing comprehensive school reform is not the right starting place for every school. Here are three of the common reasons why schools decide to devote more time to planning or getting ready for the implementation phase:

1. *A school may decide that its needs for change at this time are not comprehensive in nature.* A school's self-evaluation may reveal that overall the school's improvement efforts are on track—with some isolated exceptions. Perhaps the school seems weak in a particular subject area. Or a small fraction of the school's faculty is not "on board" with the school's new direction. Or the school has not integrated technology sufficiently into an otherwise promising approach. If a school can pinpoint problems like these, using more targeted strategies may be more appropriate than beginning an entirely new comprehensive reform approach.

If you decide a targeted strategy is more appropriate for your school because your overall improvement efforts are on track, some of the resources developed to support the CSR Program can help you. For example, the *Catalog of School Reform Models* (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001) contains information about a wide variety of CSR models, plus additional entries on reading/language arts, math, and science models. Currently, the catalog includes information on 48 models (27 of which are comprehensive in scope), but that list is continually being updated.

2. *School stakeholders may lack the commitment, capabilities, or collegial working relationships needed to make comprehensive reform a success.* Comprehensive school reform is a long-term process that requires all members of the school community to go above and beyond their "normal" responsibilities. First and foremost, eliciting this kind of effort requires a substantial commitment by all parts of the school community to the proposed changes.

In addition, depending upon the type of reform pursued, school stakeholders will need certain capabilities in order to carry out the reform. And since the reform envisioned is comprehensive, it requires members of the school community to work together over an extended period of time. That kind of cooperation requires a level of collegiality that many schools may not think they can muster without putting some targeted time and resources into first building this collegiality among staff and community. Many of the questions in Part 2 and Part 3 of the Self-Evaluation Tool address these issues.

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Most schools will find themselves strong in some areas, weak in others. But what should you make of your weaknesses? If your school lacks some of the capabilities implied by the assessment, does this mean that comprehensive reform is not for you? Not necessarily.

Suppose, for example, that your assessment suggests that teachers in your school lack experience working together on school improvement efforts, or that your school community does not have a common vision of where you want to go with reform. On one hand, these issues will make comprehensive school reform difficult for you. On the other hand, pursuing comprehensive school reform is one way to build the sort of experience you are lacking, to develop the sort of vision you seek.

Planning and implementing comprehensive school reform may provide the impetus for building collegiality among staff and support from the district and community.

And some comprehensive school designs provide explicit help to schools in the process of fostering collegiality and creating a shared vision.

Ultimately, your school community has to make a judgment about whether the issues surfaced by the assessment are obstacles that will block your path or opportunities for improvement that comprehensive reform can help you seize. If you decide to move ahead, you will come back to these issues as you choose and implement a comprehensive school design. You will want to make sure that the process you use to put comprehensive reform in place addresses the weak spots and builds upon the strengths you identified. ("Step 3: Profiling Your Comprehensive Reform Approach" is designed to help you make those linkages.)

If you decide not to implement a full-blown comprehensive reform effort because of internal barriers to success, one approach recommended by experienced practitioners is to start small. If your staff lacks experience working together to accomplish tasks, select a small-scale project to tackle now and achieve a small win. If your school community has trouble coming to consensus about important policies or decisions, pick a pressing but manageable issue and work through it.

You can build on small successes by taking on more and more significant activities and decisions. If your school is riddled with conflict and mistrust, prescriptions are more difficult to come by. The process of improvement is likely to involve an extended period of time as you bring in outside help, await or promote changes in staff, or conduct a more in-depth planning process. (See Appendix F for some resources to help with this process.)

3. *The school does not have the support it will need from the school district in order to implement comprehensive school reform.* Although much of the hard work of comprehensive school reform takes place at the school level, school districts can play an essential role in ensuring its success by granting schools flexibility in budgeting, staffing, and scheduling; by marshalling resources needed to implement reform; and by providing schools with technical assistance and professional development opportunities. If you do not believe you will receive this kind of support, you will need to do some groundwork before initiating comprehensive reform—establishing

relationships with district staff and advocating for a more supportive environment.

If external barriers are what cause you to hesitate before implementing comprehensive school reform, your options are more limited. You will want to work, perhaps in conjunction with other schools that share your interest in comprehensive reform, toward garnering more support from your school district for the activities you propose. (Again, Appendix F contains some resources along these lines.)

The next step, if you decide to take it, is to begin devising (or revising) a plan for comprehensive school reform. Devising that plan is the subject of the next section: profiling.

Step 3: Profiling Your Comprehensive Reform Approach

Now that you've determined your strengths and priorities for improvement, you are ready to create a "profile" of a CSR approach. The purpose of building a profile is to develop a list of components or characteristics to look for as you investigate your options. There are many ways to build this list. In addition to the tool provided here, you also might consider some of the resources listed in Appendix F.

The Profiling Tool in Appendix C helps you identify characteristics of an approach that will accomplish the following:

- Address your top-priority needs for improvement.
- Build on your existing strengths and assets.
- Help you overcome (or at least sidestep) your main challenges.
- Fit the beliefs and values of your school community.

The last bullet point deserves special consideration. Up to now, the process outlined in this guide has focused on issues related to the other three bullets—your needs for improvement, your assets, and your challenges. These are the "hard realities" of your situation—the objective facts that describe where you are today. But two schools could very well find themselves in the same objective situation and yet choose different paths because the values and beliefs that school stakeholders bring to the table are different.

The hard realities, for example, may tell you that you need to revamp your instructional behaviors in order to raise student achievement, but they won' t tell you which of several instructional approaches will provide the best fit for you. To answer that question, your school community will need to inquire more deeply into what kind of school it wants to create, and this Profiling Tool can provide some steps in that direction.

As an outcome of using the Profiling Tool, you will develop a concise statement of what you are looking for in a CSR approach. This concise statement will help you target and complete your research into various reform models (as discussed under Step 4: "Making a Decision").

Instructions

The Profiling Tool presents a list of indicators or characteristics of CSR approaches, many of which may be addressed by adopting an external model. The indicators are directly linked to the 11 criteria of the CSR Program. For each indicator, you are asked to rate the approach using the following scale: "Essential," "Desirable," "Does Not Matter or Apply," "Undesirable," and "Unacceptable." (See the two examples on page 14.)

Example 1:

If your school identified lack of a shared vision as one of the top priorities for improvement (or as one of the primary barriers to success), you would want to check "Essential" or "Desirable" on the first line. And because you do not have an existing vision, you would check "Does Not Matter or Apply" on the second line.

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Helps our school devise a new vision for school improvement	✔				
Helps our school refine an existing vision for school improvement			✔		

Example 2:

If your school has a compelling shared vision as one of its main strengths, you would not want to pursue an approach that asked you to rethink your vision from scratch. So, you would check "Unacceptable" on the first line. And, if you thought some refinement was in order, you might check "Desirable" or even "Essential" on the next line.

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Helps our school devise a new vision for school improvement					✔
Helps our school refine an existing vision for school improvement		✔			

At one extreme, you might find an indicator "Essential" to your school—the CSR approach that your school adopts *must* address this indicator. At the other extreme, you might label an indicator "Unacceptable"—a CSR approach that you would not be willing to accept. In between, you might indicate that a particular indicator is "Desirable" (but not essential), "Undesirable" (though not unacceptable), or that an indicator "Does Not Matter or Apply."

The Profiling Tool is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all possible indicators of CSR approaches...far from it. The instrument includes lots of space for you to add additional indicators that you deem important—on either end of the essential-to-unacceptable spectrum.

It may be tempting to check "Essential" for quite a few of the indicators you see (and some others). Most schools see lots of opportunity for improvement and are eager to tackle all of their challenges at once. But it is vital to use the "Essential" checkmarks sparingly. An approach that tackles too much can be overwhelming and can lack focus. And when you move into Step 4 for researching and deciding upon CSR models, having too many "Essential" checkmarks will make it difficult or impossible to identify a model that fits. Setting priorities and addressing the one to three priorities for improvement will help your school begin and sustain the effort.

Producing a Summary Profile

After you have completed the Profiling Tool, finish the job by crafting a short summary of the nature of the CSR approach suggested by your analysis. Try to write down in just a paragraph or two the vital elements that your approach must have. In this summary, emphasize the "Essential" as well as the "Unacceptable" checkmarks from the instrument.

For example, suppose in your self-evaluation you found that one of your school's greatest needs for improvement was in the area of helping students enhance higher-order thinking skills. Imagine that you concluded that your curriculum was not at the core of your problem—the curriculum contained plenty of material aimed at this aspect of learning. The difficulties arose in the instructional behaviors in which teachers were engaging—behaviors that did not do as much as you would like to develop higher-order capabilities. You found that your staff was fairly committed to change, and that they worked together well in a group decision-making setting. But you also found that teachers were very uncomfortable being observed by their peers in class and in receiving feedback from one another about instructional techniques.

In this situation, your summary might read something like this:

> *Our school's comprehensive school reform approach must increase our students' capacity to engage in higher-order thinking. To achieve this end, the approach must lead to changes in the instructional behavior of our teachers. We realize that observing one another and giving one another feedback will be essential to this change, but we do not feel equipped to engage in that work at present. So our comprehensive approach must help us gradually become comfortable with playing those roles.*

A real summary likely would have more to it than that. The story it tells would probably be more complicated. And the summary would probably include a heavier dose of the school's beliefs and values, talking not just about "changing instructional behaviors" but in what ways. But a real summary should share this example's clarity and focus because only a clear, focused profile can provide the basis for the next step in the process: researching and selecting the right comprehensive school reform model for your school's approach.

Step 4: Making a Decision

This guide now turns its attention to one step your school might take after completing a profile: selecting a CSR model that can support your overall approach. As you consider how to move forward with your reform approach, you might want to look outside your walls for a pre-existing school reform model that is already at work in other schools, especially those similar to your own. Adopting such a model is not for every school. The model you select may not provide everything your comprehensive school reform approach calls for, but it can provide

After all the work involved in self-analysis, profiling, and targeting, don't just toss a coin to decide on a model. The steps involved in matching your school to a design model may be the most critical of all.

Six Steps to Selecting a CSR Model

1. Conduct research.
2. Consider all of the options.
3. Make an initial decision.
4. Inform stakeholders and ask them to review the initial decision.
5. Modify the decision if necessary.
6. Approve the final decision.

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a centerpiece that helps focus your school reform activity.

Although the self-evaluation and profiling steps give you the understanding of what you need for your school and what you want in a model, it is this decision-making process that matches this information with actual models. The process has six steps: conduct research, consider all the options, make an initial decision, inform stakeholders and ask them to review the initial decision, modify the decision if necessary, and approve the final decision.

While all six steps are necessary, researching the models will be the most time consuming and important. We will therefore provide you with some guidance and suggestions about how to go about managing this task.

Research and Consideration

We recommend extensive research on a few models—perhaps two or three—that seem the best match for your school. You have many models from which to choose. In our examples, we will talk primarily about the 27 comprehensive models found in the *Catalog of School Reform Models* (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001). But keep in mind that you may have other approaches at your disposal. Local universities, for example, may have developed comprehensive models worth investigating. So think broadly at the outset, then use this process to narrow your options.

To determine your final two or three choices of models, we recommend the following process of elimination.

First Cut

In the first cut, look for simple ways to eliminate certain models. For example, your school district or state may have a list of school models from which it mandates schools to choose for purposes of the CSR Program, or at least priorities that all school reform approaches should address. If so, and if you are planning to pursue the grant available under this program, you can narrow your choices immediately to those that meet these requirements.

It might be helpful to have an external assistance provider take an objective look at the match you propose. Can you defend your choice? Does it make the most sense for supporting and advancing your school's vision?

Another simple way to narrow your choices is to start with the grade-level requirements of your school. Because some models target only certain grade levels, you can quickly eliminate a number of them without detailed research. We have provided target population information in Appendix D, drawing on information from NWREL's *Catalog of School Reform Models*. Suppose your school serves high school students. The chart of Target Populations Served by Models shows that 15 of the 27 comprehensive models serve Grades 9-12. These 15 models would make up your first cut.

Second Cut

Next consider the major elements of your Profiling Tool. Compare the areas you chose as priorities to the main features and goals of each of the first-cut models. You'll find that the *Catalog of School Reform Models* provides excellent information on the important features of the 27

comprehensive models. The catalog analyzes each model's general approach, results with students, implementation and costs, and other elements. A table accompanying each entry summarizes this information in a concise format. For example, suppose your profile reveals that you place a high priority on finding a model that focuses on helping your school reorganize its governance and management structures. Not all of the models place that focus at their centers; some emphasize curriculum or instructional methods instead. Eliminating the models that do not match your central goals and priorities will help lower the number of eligible models to consider.

Third Cut

In this third cut, you'll want to narrow your choices down to your final two or three. The best way to do this is to match the characteristics you want in your approach (your profile) with the characteristics of the actual models. We have provided a grid to help track this information. (See Appendix E for a blank grid as well as a sample grid for high school CSR models.) Along the top of the grid, fill in the models remaining after your second cut. Along the left side, fill in the statements you marked "Essential" or "Unacceptable" in your Profiling Tool. Then examine your second-cut models to see whether they meet the needs implied by the statements in the Profiling Tool.

The following resources may be useful:

- *Catalog of School Reform Models* (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001)
- *An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Reform* (Herman, Aladjam, McMahon, Masem, Mulligan, Smith et al., 1999)
- *Better by Design? A Consumer's Guide to Schoolwide Reform* (Traub, 1999)
- *The National Clearinghouse on Comprehensive School Reform* Web site (www.goodschools.gwu.edu)
- Web sites of individual model providers (see the links from NCREL and other Web sites listed in Appendix F)
- *Comprehensive School Reform* (CSR) *Program* Web site at the U.S. Department of Education (Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2001b)

For additional information on these resources, refer to the References section and to Appendix F: Resources.

You probably will not be able to determine from these resources how a specific model treats all of your profile's components. At this stage, though, absolute thoroughness is not a priority. If a model matches most of your profile, finding out whether it also matches that 23rd component is not all that important. Or if a model contains few matching elements, there is no reason to seek out information about questionable components.

Don' t contract and begin intensive work with a reform model developer until you are both clear on what your responsibilities are for implementing the effort and for determining what success looks like in six months, in one year, in three years.

After you have completed the grid, you should be able to determine which two or three models have the greatest number of characteristics you are looking for and/or the model characteristics that are most important to you. We

suggest narrowing the number to two or three because the next stage of research can be relatively time-consuming. Before going on to the next cut, you will want to contact the developers you are considering to determine their availability and capacity to provide services in your school.

Final Cut

At this point, your research efforts should be much more thorough. To help in your decision process, we have compiled some suggested questions (see Appendix G), mostly organized along the lines of the 11 CSR Program criteria. Many of these questions, of course, relate to the general characteristics of the model in question. But it is vital for participants in the process to go beyond these general characteristics and ask very specific questions about how adoption of the model would affect them and others in similar roles. Therefore, you also will see numerous questions that different individuals might pose about what a given model means for them, especially under the "Scientifically Based Methods and Strategies" section.

Note that some of the research questions in Appendix G are applicable only if your Profiling Tool says they are. For instance, if you made the statement that the ideal CSR approach does not alter your current governance or management, you may want to spend less time on the questions related to these topics.

For this final stage of research, you also should seek out other resources. These resources might include interviews of the model developers and visits to other schools that have implemented the model. Schools in NCREL's region can find model sites listed on NCREL's Web site (see Appendix F).

We strongly recommend that you visit schools that are similar to your own and that are implementing the model(s) you are considering. We also recommend that you prepare for your visit by developing a list of specific questions for the school's administrators, teachers, students, and community members.

Initial Decision

Your initial decision should be made after careful research and serious consideration of whether this match is right for your school. It is very important for you to determine not just whether this match works in theory but also in practice. Go beyond the on-paper characteristics of the models. Think about and get concrete answers to questions like these: "How will the stakeholders in our school work with the model developers and those providing technical assistance and training?" "Who from the developer's group will be assigned to work with us, and how often will they be on site?" "What kinds of staffing changes should we anticipate?" "How will the work of administrators, teachers, students, and parents change as a result of this partnership?" "What kinds of changes can we expect in student achievement and when?" These types of questions are necessary to discover the human dimensions of the match between your school and a comprehensive school reform model.

Direct contact with the model developers is critical at this point. Negotiating the specifics details of your work together now will lower your chances of facing unpleasant "surprises" later. Being a critical consumer is essential. Do not be swayed by marketing techniques or unsubstantiated promises of quick success. Comprehensive reform requires a commitment of time, dollars, and human resources that

should be driven by sound data and made only after the details are concretely negotiated.

The process you use to arrive at the initial decision is beyond the scope of this guide.

Your stakeholders should understand your decision to select a CSR approach and what added value the external design brings.

Coming to a consensus or using a voting process within your planning group may be difficult, but it is of critical importance. This is one of the places where having a skilled facilitator involved is of the utmost value.

Stakeholder Review

Although making a good match is an important goal, agreement about which decision you choose also is vital. The next step in this decision-making process is to ask stakeholders to review your initial decision. The stakeholders should include (at least) teachers, school support teams, parents, community members partnering with the school, and district or state officials. When determining how stakeholders will review your decision, strive to create a healthy balance between casting a wide net and creating an efficient process that allows for closure.

Some school models set forth a required process that you must follow in order to become eligible to implement the model. For example, it is common for models to require a certain percentage of the school's faculty to vote "yes" in a referendum about whether to adopt the model. If your chosen model prescribes procedures like these, you will obviously want to shape your stakeholder review process accordingly.

Reconsidering Your Decision and Final Approval

The final two steps in this decision-making process are modifying your initial decision (if necessary) after the stakeholder review, and giving the decision your final approval. At this stage, changes in your plans should still be driven by information you have gathered about the needs of your students and school. Be sure to go back to the developers with any changes to ensure that they can still meet your school's demands. Ideally, this entire process has stimulated a high level of commitment for comprehensive school reform in your school and has provided a strong foundation for the implementation of the approach you have devised.

Conclusion

Comprehensive school reform offers the promise of dramatic improvements in student learning for your entire school. Not surprisingly, the process of successfully engaging in comprehensive reform is complex. This guide has provided a broad outline of a process to help organize that complexity. But this guide and other resources listed here are only tools. The realization of comprehensive reform's promise will come only when teachers, administrators, parents, and others put tools like this to work where it counts. Your ingenuity in using these tools will be the key to effective comprehensive reform.

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Appendix A

Self-Evaluation Tool

This NCREL-developed Self-Evaluation Tool is designed to help schools create a snapshot of where they are—in relation to critical factors such as governance and management, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and community involvement.

Schools can approach the issue of who should complete this tool in different ways. One approach is to have your team discuss each question and arrive at a common judgment. Another is to have individuals fill out the tool and then tabulate and discuss the results. Either way, it is important to have a mechanism for differences of opinion to be expressed and considered.

For each question in Part 1 and Part 2, indicate the extent to which the question is addressed in your school. The choices are "Not at All," "Slight Extent," "Moderate Extent," "Great Extent," and "Not Applicable." To the right of the ratings, the tool provides space for you to provide details and evidence to support your judgments.

The questions in Part 3 are open-ended questions and do not include ratings. To the right of each question is space for you to write your thoughts in the form of details and evidence.

Because of the general nature of the questions, providing details and evidence to support your judgment is critical to your response. For example, one of the questions in Part 1 of the Self-Evaluation is: "To what extent is the proportion of students meeting your school's standards consistent across subjects, grade levels, and student groups?" Suppose you gave your school a "Slight Extent" rating on this question. The "Details and Evidence" section provides a place to be more specific.

You might note, for example, that student performance is especially low in reading, while achievement in other subjects looks a lot better, or that student groups are performing at similar levels, with the exception of those for whom English is not their first language. You also might make note of any evidence you have to support your conclusions—test score data, for instance, that show gaps between your reading scores and those in other subjects. Clearly, the space provided will not always be sufficient to include this kind of information, so use additional sheets or attach supporting material as needed. Such attachments may be helpful as you complete your CSR grant application.

The Self-Evaluation Tool also has spaces where you can include more specific questions that your school thinks are important. For example, suppose your school recently embarked on an effort to introduce alternative forms of assessment, such as using portfolios of student work to gauge progress over time. You might add a series of questions to ask how well this specific initiative was shaping up, such as: "To what extent are teachers in our school using portfolios to assess students' progress?" "To what extent does the use of portfolios vary by teacher, grade level, or subject?" "To what extent are our teachers well prepared to guide students in their preparation of portfolios?" "To what extent are teachers effectively using the information they gain through portfolios to adjust their instruction for individual children?"

However you decide to approach using this tool, it is critical that you spend quality time responding to the questions and providing supporting evidence.

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Part I: Our Students

	Judgment					Details and Evidence
Students' Learning and Accomplishments *To what extent...*	Not at All	Slight Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Not Applicable	
Are students meeting your school's learning standards?						
Is the proportion of students meeting your school's standards consistent across subjects, grade levels, and student groups?						
Are specific student populations (at-risk, disabled, or limited-English-proficient students) successful in their learning?						
Are students meeting your school's standards for attendance and in-school behavior?						
Are the proportions of students meeting your school's standards for attendance and in-school behavior consistent across grade levels and student groups?						
Are your students engaged in, and excited about learning?						
Is students' engagement in learning consistent across subjects, grade levels, and student groups?						
Other Questions						

Part 2: The Current State of Our School's Program

	Judgment					Details and Evidence
Comprehensive Program *To what extent...*	Not at All	Slight Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Not Applicable	
Do teachers, administrators, and staff have a shared vision for the school?						
Does school improvement encompass the whole school rather than focusing on particular grade levels, subjects, students, or teachers?						
Is the quality of your school improvement efforts consistent across issues, goals and focus?						
Are your school improvement efforts aligned with your vision?						
Support Within the School *To what extent...*						
Is the school staff supportive of a vision for the school?						
Is this support consistent across school staff?						
Is the school staff supportive of school improvement efforts?						
Is this support consistent across school staff?						
Do the principal and staff agree on implementation of school improvement efforts?						
Is staff willing to assess strengths and weaknesses and make necessary changes?						
Measurable Goals and Benchmarks *To what extent...*						
Are there measurable goals for student performance?						
Are there clear benchmarks for meeting these goals?						
Are the school's goals for student performance aligned with the school's vision?						
Are the school's goals for student performance aligned with state or local standards and assessments?						

Part 2: The Current State of Our School's Program (*continued*)

	Judgment					Details and Evidence
Scientifically Based Research Methods and Strategies: *Curriculum* *To what extent...*	Not at All	Slight Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Not Applicable	
Is your school's curriculum effective?						
Is the curriculum based on research?						
Is the quality of your curriculum consistent across subjects, grade levels, and student groups?						
Does the curriculum meet the needs of specific student populations (at-risk, disabled, or limited-English-proficient students)?						
Is your school's curriculum aligned across grades and subjects (i.e., how well do the subjects complement and reinforce each other)?						
Is your school's curriculum aligned with state or local standards?						
Are teachers supportive of your school's curriculum?						
Scientifically Based Research Methods and Strategies: *Instruction* *To what extent...*						
Is the instruction effective in your school?						
Is instructional quality consistent across subjects, grade levels, teachers, and student groups?						
Are instructional methods based on research that indicates what works?						
Do instructional strategies meet the needs of specific student populations (at-risk, disabled, or limited-English-proficient students)?						
Is instruction aligned with curriculum in your school?						
Is technology integrated into your school's instruction?						
Is technology effective as an instructional tool in engaging students in learning?						
Is the use of technology consistent across subjects, grade levels, and student groups?						

Part 2: The Current State of Our School's Program (*continued*)

	Judgment					Details and Evidence
Scientifically Based Research Methods and Strategies: *Assessment* *To what extent...*	Not at All	Slight Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Not Applicable	
Does your school effectively assess student learning?						
Is assessment quality consistent across subjects, grade levels, and student groups?						
Does your school use student assessment to help teachers change their practice?						
Is student assessment aligned with curriculum and instruction in your school?						
Is the school staff supportive of student assessment processes?						
Is support for your school's student assessment processes consistent across school staff?						
Scientifically Based Research Methods and Strategies: *Governance* *To what extent...*						
Does your school community make good decisions about policy and direction?						
Is the quality of school governance consistent across issues?						
Is the school staff supportive of governance processes and decisions?						
Is support for governance processes and decisions consistent across school staff?						
Is the school staff engaged in school governance?						
Is engagement consistent across school staff?						
Is your school community willing to change the governance structure in order to improve the school?						

Part 2: The Current State of Our School's Program (*continued*)

	Judgment					Details and Evidence
Scientifically Based Research Methods and Strategies: *Management* *To what extent...*	Not at All	Slight Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Not Applicable	
Do your school administrators effectively manage the day-to-day affairs of the school?						
Does the management system effectively support your school's teaching and learning?						
Is the quality of school management consistent across issues, goals, and focus?						
Is the school staff supportive of management processes and decisions?						
Is support for management processes and decisions consistent across school staff?						
Is the school staff engaged in school management?						
Is engagement consistent across school staff?						
Is your school community willing to change the management system in order to improve the school?						

Part 2: The Current State of Our School's Program (*continued*)

	Judgment					Details and Evidence
Professional Development *To what extent...*	Not at All	Slight Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Not Applicable	
Is your school's professional development program effective?						
Does your school's professional development efforts align with and support the school's academic goals?						
Is the quality of professional development consistent across issues, goals, and focus?						
Does the school base its professional development plan on its academic strengths and weaknesses?						
Are teachers, teacher aids, and other school staff engaged in planning professional development activities?						
Do the school's professional development efforts effectively address the training needs of the principal and other administrators?						
Do the school's professional development efforts effectively address the training needs of teachers, teacher aids, and other school staff?						
Are your professional development efforts integrated with each other?						
Is the school staff engaged in professional development?						
Is this engagement consistent across school staff?						
External Technical Support and Services *To what extent...*						
Does your school's program use external support and assistance from a comprehensive school reform entity?						

Part 2: The Current State of Our School's Program *(continued)*

	Judgment					Details and Evidence
Parent and Community Involvement: ***Parent Involvement*** *To what extent...*	Not at All	Slight Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Not Applicable	
Are parents involved in your school community?						
Does the school staff provide parents with easily understood information about standards and expectations for student achievement?						
Do parents provide effective at-home learning opportunities?						
Are your parent involvement and school improvement efforts well integrated?						
Are parents supportive of your school's education program?						
Is support for your school's program consistent across parents?						
Are parents involved in decision making at the school?						
Is this engagement consistent across parents?						
Parent and Community Involvement: ***Community Involvement*** *To what extent...*						
Are your school's community involvement efforts effective?						
Does the school staff provide community partners with easily understood information about standards and expectations for student achievement?						
Are your community involvement and school improvement efforts well integrated?						
Are community partners engaged in providing outside learning opportunities for students?						
Are community partners involved in decision making at the school?						
Is engagement consistent across community members?						

Part II: The Current State of Our School's Program (*continued*)

	Judgment					Details and Evidence
Coordination of Resources *To what extent...*	Not at All	Slight Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Not Applicable	
Are other resources (federal, state, local, and private) coordinated to maximize the school's reform effort?						
Evaluation Strategies *To what extent...*						
Does your school effectively evaluate its own performance?						
Does the school community adjust its practices based on evaluation results?						
Is the quality of your school evaluation consistent across issues, goals, and focus?						
Does the school align its evaluation efforts to state and local standards?						
Is the school staff supportive of your school's evaluation efforts?						
Is this support consistent across school staff?						
Is the school staff engaged in school evaluation processes?						

Part 2: The Current State of Our School's Program (*continued*)

	Judgment					Details and Evidence
Other Questions *To what extent...*	Not at All	Slight Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Not Applicable	

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Part 3: Our Environment

Other Existing Reform Efforts	**Details and Evidence**
How might comprehensive school reform fit (or clash) with other reform efforts under way in our district or state?	
Policy and Regulatory Issues	
How much flexibility do we have regarding our professional development activities?	
How much flexibility do we have regarding our school schedule (day and year)?	
How much flexibility do we have regarding our staffing decisions?	
How much flexibility do we have regarding the allocation of our school's funds?	
Is it possible for us to obtain special "waivers" from district policies to try new approaches?	
Can school districts petition the state for similar waivers of state restrictions?	
How likely are these exemptions to come through?	
Financial Resources	
What kinds of financial resources and support are available to us from the district (or other entities) to pursue reform?	
Are there financial resources we could reallocate from other uses to support reform?	
What are the constraints on our financial resources?	
Human Resources	
What kinds of human resources and support are available to us from the district (or other entities) to pursue reform?	
What are the constraints on our human resources?	

Part 3: Our Environment (*continued*)

Other Questions	Details and Evidence

Appendix B

Summary of Self-Evaluation

The Summary of Self-Evaluation provides you with the opportunity to pull together what you have learned by completing the Self-Evaluation Tool. The goal is to help you identify the assets your school brings with it as well as the challenges you face. Both the assets and the challenges can be internal (characteristics of your school) or external (characteristics of the environment in which your school works).

The Summary of Self-Evaluation poses six guiding questions. To answer these questions, draw on all parts of the Self-Evaluation you just completed. For example, in answer to the Guiding Question 1, you might begin by drawing on some of the student achievement information from Appendix A, Part 1, noting that your students do particularly well in math, or that your older students are especially strong in math. Using this information, you also might comment that your school's curriculum is quite well put-together, that teachers are heavily engaged in decision making at schools, and that many parents are highly involved in the school's workings. From Appendix A, Part 3, you might point to external support, such as the array of technical assistance available from central office staff on instructional strategies.

In answer to the Guiding Questions 2 and 3, you might draw on information in Appendix A, Part 1, indicating that in reading, your students lag behind their performance in other subjects and that limited-English-proficient students are not doing as well as others. From Appendix A, Part 2, you might express frustration that instructional behaviors have not changed in response to changes in curriculum or that they have changed only across a subset of classrooms.

For Guiding Question 4, you might note (from Appendix A, Part 2) that your faculty has little experience observing one another and offering feedback—activities that might be critical to implementing comprehensive school reform. Also drawing on this information, you might conclude that in the past, certain state regulations had prevented you from putting into place some of the scheduling and staffing changes that appeared helpful.

For Guiding Questions 5 and 6, you might note (from Appendix A, Part 2) that some parents are highly involved in the school, but efforts to involve minority parents should be improved.

It is important at this stage to begin paring what could be a set of very long lists into something manageable. Begin prioritizing here, identifying your most important strengths and challenges.

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Guiding Question 1

What are our school's major strengths?

Guiding Question 2

What areas of our school need improvement?

Guiding Question 3

Of these areas for improvement, which have the highest priorities?

Guiding Question 4

What barriers (both internal and external) do we expect to face as we move forward on comprehensive reform?

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Guiding Question 5

What aspects of our school's environment might provide support for our pursuit of comprehensive reform?

Guiding Question 6

What areas of our environment might hinder our ability to pursue comprehensive school reform?

Appendix C

Profiling Tool

The Profiling Tool presents you with a list of indicators or characteristics of CSR approaches, many of which may be addressed by adopting an external model. You are asked to determine the extent to which the right CSR approach for your school should focus on each or any of these indicators. The indicators are directly linked to the 11 criteria of the CSR Program.

For each indicator, you are asked to rate the approach using the following scale:

- Essential
- Desirable
- Does Not Matter or Apply
- Undesirable
- Unacceptable

At one extreme, you might find an indicator "Essential" to your school—the CSR approach that your school adopts *must* address this indicator. At the other extreme, you might label an indicator "Unacceptable"—the CSR approach is one that you would not be willing to accept. In between, you might indicate that a particular indicator is "Desirable" (but not essential), "Undesirable" (though not unacceptable), or that an indicator "Does Not Matter or Apply."

The Profiling Tool is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all possible indicators of CSR approaches. The tool includes lots of space for you to add additional indicators that you deem important—at either end of the essential-to-unacceptable spectrum.

It may be tempting to check "Essential" for quite a few of the indicators you see (and some others). Most schools see lots of opportunity for improvement and are eager to tackle all of their challenges at once. But it is vital to use the "Essential" checkmarks very sparingly. Setting priorities and addressing the one to three priorities for improvement will help your school begin and sustain the effort.

Example 1:

If your school identified lack of a shared vision as one of the top priorities for improvement (or as one of the primary barriers to success), you would want to check "Essential" or "Desirable" on the first line. And because you do not have an existing vision, on you would check "Does Not Matter or Apply" on the second line.

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Helps our school devise a new vision for school improvement	✔				
Helps our school refine an existing vision for school improvement			✔		

Example 2:

If your school has a compelling shared vision as one of its main strengths, you would not want to pursue an approach that asked you to rethink your vision from scratch. So, you would check "Unacceptable" on the first line. And you might check "Desirable" or even "Essential" on the next line if you thought some refinement was in order.

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Helps our school devise a new vision for school improvement					✔
Helps our school refine an existing vision for school improvement		✔			

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1. *Comprehensive Approach*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Helps our school devise a new vision for school improvement.					
Helps our school refine our existing vision for school improvement.					
Includes a preexisting vision of effective schooling that we can adopt.					

2. *Support Within the School*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Helps build support within our school for an existing program of improvement.					
Includes a participatory process in which staff helps craft the reform plan.					

3. *Goals and Benchmarks*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Includes a comprehensive set of goals and benchmarks to which our students can aspire.					
Includes a process through which our school sets its own goals and benchmarks to achieve.					

4. *Strategies That Improve Academic Achievement*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Includes a process for identifying benchmarks, measuring student achievement, and making improvements as needed.					
Provides data on student progress and achievement from other schools currently using the same CSR approach.					
Demonstrates significant gains in student test scores (in schools using the model) on local, state, and national standardized tests.					

5a. *Scientifically Based Research Strategies and Methods—Curriculum*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Provides assistance in the process of developing our own curriculum.					
Allows our school to use the curriculum we now have.					
Provides curriculum in the area of:					
• Reading					
• Writing					
• Mathematics					
• Language Arts/Literature					
• Science					
• Social Studies					
• Fine Arts					
Includes a curriculum that:					
• Emphasizes practical application of knowledge to authentic problems					
• Emphasizes integration across subjects					
• Emphasizes vocational studies and work-based learning opportunities					
• Includes critical thinking skills					
• Is tailored to students' backgrounds or has multicultural content					
•					
•					
•					
•					
•					

5b. *Scientifically Based Research Strategies and Methods—Instruction*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Focuses on improving our school's instructional practices.					
Emphasizes the following in its instructional methods:					
◦ Technology-based instruction					
◦ Highly scripted lessons					
◦ Hands-on learning					
• Practical, authentic activities					
◦ One-on-one tutoring					
• Individualized instruction					
• Work tailored to each child's level					
• Student-driven instruction					
• Allowing students their choice of learning activity					
◦ Team teaching					
• Heterogeneous grouping					
• Homogeneous grouping					
• Personal learning plans					
◦ A longer school day/year					
◦ Restructured day/year					
• Constructivist strategies					
◦ Metacognitive strategies					
• The teacher as facilitator					
◦ Cooperative learning					
• Peer tutoring					
◦ Multiple intelligences					
◦ Flexible scheduling					
◦ Small class size					
• The use of technology					
• Learning outside the classroom					
•					
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•					
◦					

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5c. Scientifically Based Research Strategies and Methods—Assessment

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Includes new ways of assessing our students' progress.					
Aligns with existing assessments that we are required or have chosen to administer.					
Includes assessment strategies that:					
• Judge student progress frequently					
• Emphasize "performance assessment"					
• Use student portfolios					
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5d. Scientifically Based Research Strategies and Method—Governance and Management

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Uses a common process for reorganizing and/or improving our school.					
Does not alter (or fits with) our existing governance structures and processes.					
Does not require us to make major changes in the number of staff we have.					
Does not require us to make major changes in the type of staff we have.					
Emphasizes the following in its methods of governance: • A participatory approach to decision making					
• A collaborative or team approach to school improvement					
• Consensus building among staff					
• The principal as facilitator and support provider					
•					
•					
•					
•					
•					
•					
•					

6. *Professional Development*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Includes intensive professional development in: • New methods of teaching					
• Areas of curricular content					
• Governance/leadership					
• Peer coaching/observation					
• Working as a team					
• Building support for change among others					
• Parent/community relations					
• Evaluation/research					
•					
•					
•					
•					
•					
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•					
• •					
•					
Includes conferences for teachers to attend.					
Includes visits to other schools engaged in a similar approach.					

7. *Support for Teachers, Administrators, and Other Staff*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Includes professional development and/or training about CSR for school administrators, teacher aides, counselors, and other school staff.					
Provides opportunities and resources for administrators and other school staff to plan and coordinate efforts with classroom teachers.					
Provides opportunities and resources for administrators and other staff to network with others engaged in CSR.					

8. *External Assistance*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Includes follow-up on-site technical assistance from an outside organization.					
Includes an electronic network for others engaged in a similar approach.					

9. *Parent and Community Involvement*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Emphasizes a role for parents in decision making about central school issues.					
Emphasizes a role for community members in decision making about central school issues.					
Equips parents to play a more active role in in-home learning.					
Helps the school involve parents and community members as volunteers.					
Includes the provision of family support services.					
Includes the provision of health and social services at the school site.					
Involves close partnerships with museums, libraries, or _____ (specify).					

10. *Coordination of Resources*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Helps the school tap into new sources of funding and other resources.					
Does not require the school to obtain new sources of funding.					
Does not require the school to reallocate existing resources.					
Helps the school devise ways to reallocate existing resources.					

11. *Evaluation*

The approach...	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter or Apply	Undesirable	Unacceptable
Equips our staff to track the school's progress towards its goals.					
Provides outside evaluation of our school's progress toward its goals.					

Appendix D

Target Populations Served by Models

The chart of Target Populations Served by Models provides population information that can help you make your first cut and eliminate certain models. The information comes from the *Catalog of School Reform Models* (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001). Because some models target only certain grade levels, you can quickly eliminate a number of them without detailed research. For example, suppose your school serves high school students. The chart shows that 15 of the 27 models serve Grades 9-12. The resulting 15 models would make up your first cut.

Appendix D

Target Populations Served by Models

Name of Model	Pre-K	Elem. (K-5)	Middle (6-8)	High (9-12)
Accelerated Schools		✔	✔	
America's Choice School Design		✔	✔	✔
ATLAS Communities	✔	✔	✔	✔
Center for Effective Schools		✔	✔	✔
Child Development Project		✔ (K-6)		
Community for Learning		✔	✔	✔
Co-NECT Schools		✔	✔	✔
Core Knowledge		✔	✔	
Different Ways of Knowing (Galef Institute)	✔	✔	✔	
Direct Instruction		✔	✔	
Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound		✔	✔	✔
High Schools That Work				✔
High/Scope Primary Grades Approach to Education		✔ (K-3)		
Integrated Thematic Instruction		✔	✔	✔
Learning Network		✔	✔	
MicroSociety		✔	✔	
Modern Red Schoolhouse		✔	✔	✔
Onward to Excellence		✔	✔	✔
OuESt		✔	✔	✔
Roots & Wings	✔	✔ (K-6)		
School Development Program		✔	✔	✔
Success for All	✔	✔ (K-6)		
Talent Development High School with Career Academics				✔
Talent Development Middle School		✔	✔ (4-9)	
Turning Points			✔	
Urban Learning Centers	✔	✔	✔	✔
Ventures Initiative and Focus System		✔	✔	✔

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Appendix E

Research Grid

This Research Grid will help you make your final cut of models. Along the top of the blank grid, fill in the models remaining after your second cut (as determined by the models' appropriate grade levels specified in Appendix D). Along the left side, fill in the statements you marked "Essential" or "Unacceptable" in your Profiling Tool. Then examine your second-cut models to see whether they meet the needs implied by the statements in the Profiling Tool. Models that meet the "Essential" statements are worth considering. Models that have "Unacceptable" statements probably will not meet the needs of your school.

To help you understand this process, we have included an example grid of models that serve high schools.

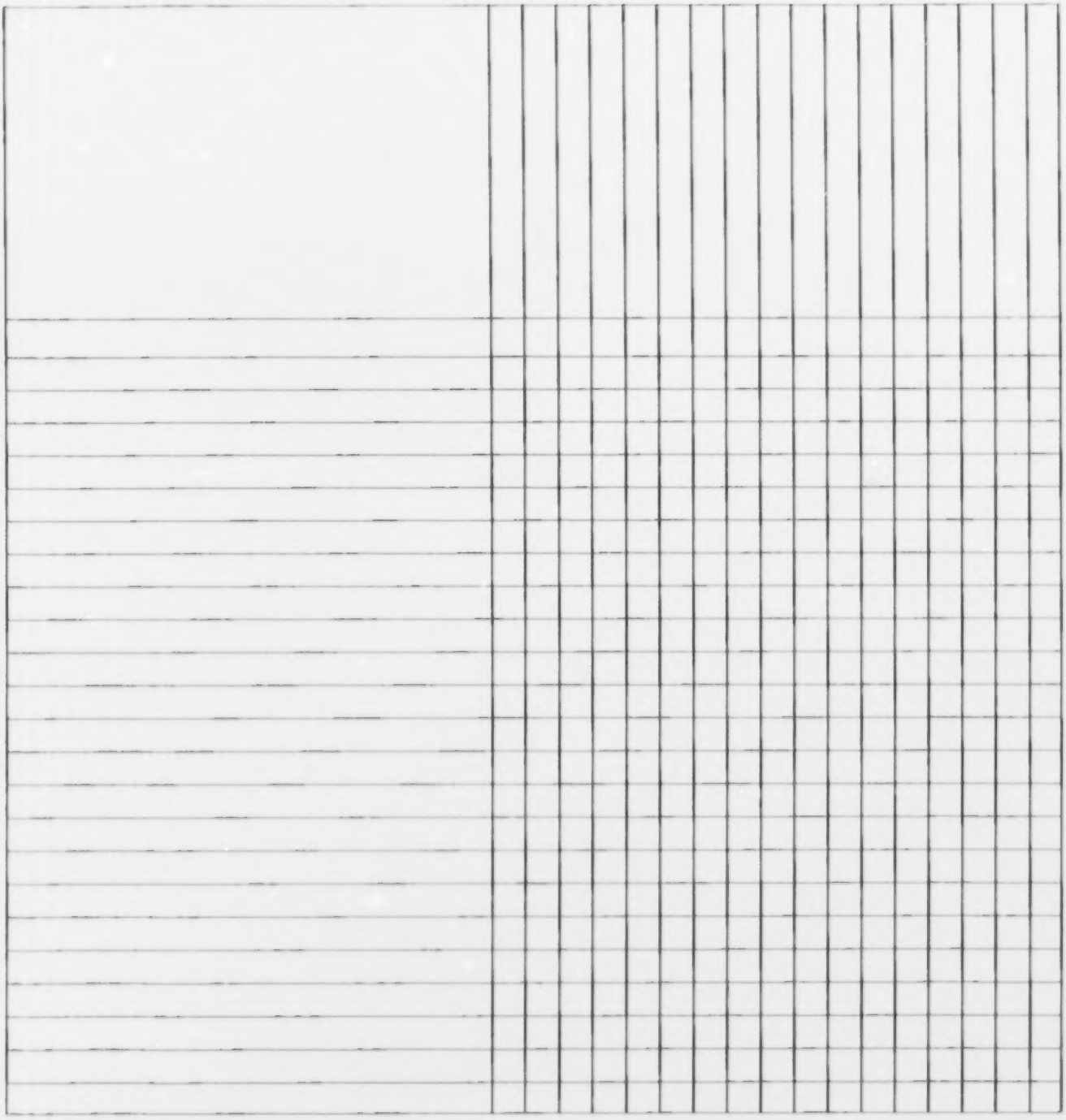
The following resources may be useful at this stage:

- *Catalog of School Reform Models* (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001)
- *An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Reform* (Herman, Aladjam, McMahon, Masem, Mulligan, Smith et al., 1999)
- *Better by Design? A Consumer's Guide to Schoolwide Reform* (Traub, 1999)
- *The National Clearinghouse on Comprehensive School Reform* Web site (www.goodschools.gwu.edu)
- Web sites of individual model providers (See links from NCREL and other Web sites listed in Appendix F.)
- *Comprehensive School Reform* (CSR) *Program* Web site at the U.S. Department of Education (Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2001b)

For additional information on these resources, refer to the References section and to Appendix F: Resources.

After you have completed the grid, you should be able to determine which two or three models have the greatest number of characteristics you are looking for and that are most important to you.

Blank Research Grid



Example Research Grid of Models That Serve High Schools

	America's Choice	ATLAS Communities	Center for Effective Schools	Co-NECT Schools	Community for Learning	Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound	High Schools That Work	Integrated Thematic Instruction	Modern Red Schoolhouse	Onward to Excellence	QuEST	School Development Program	Talent Development High School	Urban Learning Centers	Ventures Initiative and Focus System
The ideal comprehensive school design serves elementary school grades and															
• Has a standards-based curriculum.															
• Emphasizes technology-based instruction.															
• Emphasizes individualized instruction.															
• Tailors work to each child's level.															
• Provides intense initial professional development.															
• Provides intense follow-up professional development.															
• Provides teacher training in content-specific areas.															
• Provides teacher training in instruction methodology.															
• Provides conferences for teachers to attend.															
• Provides an electronic network including e-mail, electronic mailing lists, and Web site support.															
• Provides on-site facilitator(s) or other support staff.															
• Integrates technology into the curriculum.															
• Does not alter our current governance and management structure.															
• Provides technical and coaching assistance throughout the visioning process.															
• Considers parental involvement a crucial aspect of its model.															
• Encourages but does not require community involvement.															

Appendix F

This list of CSR publications and Web sites will help you research information about potential models.

CSR Publications

An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Reform (1999)
This print guide examines and rates 24 schoolwide programs. It provides profiles of the programs, information on key features, and references. Available through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (ED 460 429).

Better by Design? A Consumer's Guide to Schoolwide Reform (1999)
www.fordhamfoundation.org/library/bbd/better_by_design.html
This online publication provides details on ten school models. Included are accounts of visits to schools that have implemented the models and a table of basic facts about each model.

Catalog of School Reform Models (2001)
www.nwrel.org/scpd/catalog/index.shtml
This online catalog provides information on 27 whole-school reform models and 21 skill- and content-based models, including those models referenced in the legislation. The catalog was developed by NWREL with assistance from the Education Commission of the States.

Evaluating Whole-School Reform Efforts: A Guide for District and School Staff (Second Edition, 2000)
www.nwrac.org/whole-school/index.html
This practical online guidebook walks educators through the steps involved in planning, designing, and carrying out effective evaluation of their CSR programs. It describes how to plan and prepare for an evaluation; develop evaluation questions; collect, analyze, interpret, and report data; and use findings to make program improvements.

Implementing Schoolwide Programs (Volume I): An Idea Book on Planning (1998)
www.ed.gov/pubs/Idea_Planning/index.html
This online document sets forth a comprehensive planning process for schoolwide change, based on the experience of schools that have successfully engaged in comprehensive school reform. It provides more detailed guidance on several aspects of the planning process, such as needs assessment.

Implementing Schoolwide Programs (Volume II): Profiles of Successful Schoolwide Programs (1998)
www.ed.gov/pubs/idea_profiles/index.html
This online publication provides detailed profiles of eight successful schoolwide programs—six elementary schools, a middle school, and a Grade 7-12 secondary school. It offers guidance, examples, and resources for planners and operators of schoolwide programs.

School-Based Reform: Lessons From the National Study—A Guide for School Reform Teams (1995)
www.ed.gov/pubs/Reform/index.html
This online resource is geared for teachers and school administrators interested in undertaking school-based reforms. It provides examples of promising reform strategies and lessons learned from a national study of school-based reform.

CSR *Web Sites*

U.S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/
The U.S. Department of Education's *Comprehensive School Reform* (CSR) *Program* Web site provides detailed information on comprehensive school reform, including CSR program guidance and information, the state application package, a CSR state-by-state funding allocation table, and links to publications and tools.

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL)
www.ncrel.org/csri/
NCREL's *Comprehensive School Reform* Web site provides CSR guidance and information, resources, and CSR tools.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL)
www.nwrel.org/csrdp/
NWREL's *Comprehensive School Reform* Web site offers descriptions of school designs, contact information for service providers, a list of Northwest sites, descriptions of the types of assistance available, and Internet links to articles about reform models. Included on this site is the *Catalog of School Reform Models*, a School CSR Self-Assessment Tool, and other online resources (such as *Education Week* articles about comprehensive school reform).

National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform (NCCSR)
www.goodschools.gwu.edu
Established in 1999 to disseminate information on comprehensive school reform, the National Clearinghouse is a partnership of the George Washington University, the Council for Basic Education, and the Institute for Educational Leadership. It provides reference and retrieval services, outreach, and publications.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)
www.sedl.org/csrd/
SEDL's *Comprehensive School Reform* Web site offers information about comprehensive school reform and links to other resources, such as publications, research on school reform, tools, CSR Web sites, and organizations involved with comprehensive school reform.

Appendix G

We have compiled some suggested questions, mostly organized along the lines of the 11 CSR Program criteria. Many of these questions relate to the general characteristics of the CSR model in question. But it is vital for participants in the process to go beyond these general characteristics and ask very specific questions about how adoption of the model would affect them and others in similar roles. Therefore, you also will see numerous questions that different individuals might pose about what a given model means for them, especially under the "Effective Strategies"section.

Note that some of the research questions in the appendix are applicable only if your Profiling Tool says they are. For instance, if you made the statement that the ideal comprehensive school reform approach does not alter your current governance or management, you may want to spend less time on the questions related to these topics.

1. *Comprehensive Approach (including general questions about the model)*

Nature and Track Record of the Model

a. What is the model's underlying philosophy?

b. Does this model emphasize the areas (e.g., curriculum, governance) that we identified as priorities?

c. Where is this model flexible and where is it fixed?

d. What is the evidence of the model's success in other schools?

e. Has this model been used in schools with demographics like ours?

f. What advantages does this model have over very similar ones?

School Visioning Processes

a. Does the model include a process to help our school develop (or refine) a shared vision?

b. If so, what is that process?

c. How much time does it require?

d. Who is involved, and over what time frames?

e. Does the design organization provide facilitators for the process? Or training for people at our school to facilitate the process?

f. How much flexibility does the school have in setting its own course versus adopting and adapting the model's ideas about what schools should be like?

2. *Support Within the School*

a. What kind of staff and/or parent buy-in is required to adopt this design?

b. Does the design organization provide assistance to school leaders in building support for the model within the school community?

3. *Goals and Benchmarks*

a. What standards for education success are required by the model?

b. To what extent are standards aligned with state/local requirements?

c. Is progress toward the standards measurable?

4. Strategies That Improve Academic Achievement

a. Does the model provide evidence of academic achievement in other schools?

b. Does the model provide evidence of student improvement on local, state, and national standardized tests?

c. Does the model provide research studies to support its scientific research base?

d. Does the model provide benchmarks and evaluation strategies to measure student progress?

5. Effective Strategies

Curriculum and Assessment

a. How well do the model's curriculum and assessment match the statements we made about our ideal approach?

b. Does this model focus on subjects or content areas where it is most important that we improve?

c. Does this model provide a specific curriculum (texts or materials)? If so, what is the curriculum?

d. Are there specific content lesson plans?

e. Does this model provide a framework for a suggested curriculum (rather than specific content)? If so, what is that framework? What would we be required to do to develop a specific curriculum using the framework?

f. What assessment methods and tools does the model suggest?

g. How would the use of these methods affect classroom teachers (in terms of time spent, training they would need, etc.)?

h. Are the assessment methods aligned with state/local requirements?

i. Does the model's staff assist with data collection, analysis, and/or reporting?

Instruction

a. How well does the model's instruction match the statements we made about our ideal approach?

b. Is there a specific instruction methodology suggested by the model? If so, what is it?

c. Are new books, technology, and other materials required in order to implement this model? If so, what are they?

d. If new books, technology, and other materials are not required, are they suggested?

e. Are the required/suggested materials provided under the cost of the program?

f. How will the materials and technology we already have work with this model?

g. Are there suggested instructional methods for special-needs students? If so, what are they?

h. Are there suggested instructional methods for limited-English-proficient students? If so, what are they?

i. What will the typical teacher do differently if we adopt this model?

j. What would we expect to see happening in a typical classroom by year end?

Governance and Management

a. Will we need to change the governance of our school (i.e., who makes decisions and how they are made)? If so, how?

b. Will we need to change the management system of our school (i.e., how the school is administered day-to-day)? If so, how?

c. What additional staff (or roles) will be required with this model (e.g., facilitator, parent-outreach coordinator)?

d. Does the design organization provide assistance with staff selection?

e. Does the design organization provide assistance in defining roles, setting performance expectations, and evaluating teachers and principals?

f. Does the design organization provide assistance managing conflict within the school?

6. *Professional Development*

a. How well does the model's professional development program match the statements we made about our ideal approach?

b. What teacher training (both initial and ongoing) does the model provide? In content? In instruction methodology? In parent relations, governance, administration, peer review and other relevant management issues?

c. How much additional staff development time will be required for the whole staff? For a smaller group of teachers?

d. Is there training for school leadership? In what areas?

e. What networking opportunities does the model provide for teachers and school leadership?

f. Are opportunities available for networking with other schools using the model?

7. *Support for Teachers, Administrators, and Other School Staff*

a. Does the model address the key role of administrators, teachers' aides, and other school staff in comprehensive school reform?

b. Does the model require buy-in from administrators and other school staff?

c. Does the model provide for professional development and/or training in CSR for administrators, aides and other staff?

d. Does the model encourage administrators and all members of the school staff to participate in planning meetings and strategy sessions?

8. *External Assistance*

a. Does the design organization help with the introduction and implementation process in each school? How?

b. How long does it typically take a school using this model to fully implement all aspects of the model?

c. What types of implementation interventions does the model stress? On-site visits? On-site facilitators? Whole-school training? Facilitator training?

d. How much flexibility is there regarding what services we receive? To what extent can you tailor a package to our needs?

e. If conflict arises between the school and the design organization, how is it handled?

f. Does the group provide assistance with state and local reporting requirements?

g. What individuals from the design group would work directly with the school? How would those people be chosen? What are their qualifications?

h. How well is the design group doing financially? Will the group be able to support us in the long run?

9. *Parent and Community Involvement*

a. How well does the model's parent and community involvement match the statements we made about our ideal approach?

b. What is the role and level of involvement of parents in the school under this model? How would a typical parent's engagement in the school change as a result of adoption of the model?

c. What is the role and level of involvement of community members and businesses in the school?

d. Does the model provide assistance with parent and community relations?

e. Does the model provide assistance addressing conflict with parents and community members?

10. *Coordination of Resources*

a. What are the required costs, including materials and services (both start-up and ongoing)?

b. What are the other costs we must incur to implement the model:

- Nontraditional staff positions?
- Release time for teachers?
- Technology?

c. Will the funds we now have cover the costs of this model?

d. Will the design organization invest in our school? If so, how?

11. *Evaluation*

a. What level of guidance does this model provide in evaluating the school after implementation?

b. Does the design organization conduct evaluations of school performance? If so, what form do these take? What impact do they have on the conduct of the school on a daily basis (i.e., what is required of staff and students)? If none, can the design organization recommend evaluation procedures that make sense in the context of the model? Can it provide assistance to school staff on the use of these procedures?

This interactive CD-ROM contains Appendices A through G from *Making Good Choices: A Guide for Schools and Districts*. It guides you through a set of surveys and open-ended questions to help you choose a comprehensive school reform model that is appropriate for your school. Your completed worksheets can be printed or saved onto your hard drive, enabling you to share information with your colleagues.

Minimum required software: Microsoft Excel 98. Adjustments to system configuration or updates to hardware component drivers may be required.

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